

# THE HISTORICAL TRAIL 1975



Captain Thomas Webb  
1724 — 1796

# The Historical Trail

Yearbook of the Historical Society of the  
Southern New Jersey Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

## FOREWORD

The Southern New Jersey Conference Historical Society is pleased once again to present an issue of our yearbook, The Historical Trail. This one is our thirteenth. We surely have grown since our first, little, mimeographed pamphlet in 1962.

Many have enjoyed every issue, but for some this issue may be the first. Welcome to our new readers, and welcome back to our old friends. This yearbook is sent to every current member of the Historical Society. We do have back copies of most issues. If you are interested, you may inquire about them of our editor, Dr. J. Hillman Coffee, 17 Brainerd Street, Mount Holly, N.J. 08060. Since we are also interested in articles for future publication, all ideas or manuscripts are invited to be sent to Dr. Coffee who is deserving of much praise for the time and devotion he gives to this publication.

We are happy to present the two, main articles in this year's Trail. For them we thank the authors, Dr. Charles A. Sayre, pastor of the Haddonfield United Methodist Church, and the Rev. Charles A. Green, minister of our church in Titusville.

As you read this issue, a special committee is already working on plans for a special Bicentennial Issue in 1976. Next year will be a great year for our country; the celebration should involve every community and every church. Your Society hopes you will generate enthusiasm in your congregation for the Bicentennial. The people of your church should be helped to learn more about their heritage, do some celebrating, and dream dreams for the future. We should all be concerned about the meaning of liberty and justice for all in this present age.

Thank you for your interest in our Society. May you enjoy reading The Historical Trail.

Robert B. Steelman  
President

## JOHN WESLEY TODAY

My love for John Wesley was awakened twenty years after my ordination as a Methodist preacher! As I rambled about England in 1963, history seemed to roll back for me; and to paraphrase the famous Asbury quotation about America, it seemed that the horses' hooves of two men (Cromwell and Wesley) printed out the historic map of England. The remarkable impression was that the memories of both live on as more real than much that is happening today, Cromwell in the hard-won freedoms enjoyed by English-speaking peoples and Wesley in the perpetual freshness of experiential religion and vital piety.

Since that time, I have claimed Wesley as a companion on the road. In the pulpit of the Haddonfield church is a small piece of burned wood recovered recently in Epworth renovations from the fire of 1709. The fire defined for Wesley his mission, and I find comfort and strength in having close at hand during preaching what is as near to a sacred relic as Methodism can offer.

It is, however, in the shape of my work as a Methodist preacher (I think Wesley would have approved of this title more than "minister") where I have most felt the power of this ubiquitous, little, Oxford don. I love the Wesleyan heritage that is mine, and I see no horizon for Methodism apart from it. I would here like to address three living concerns to which John Wesley speaks.

1. Faith is an enthusiastic experience. In how many churches do people come and go from Sunday to Sunday to hear unexcited dissertations called sermons? Nothing is expected to happen, and nothing does. Because Wesley was excited about the gift of faith, excited expectations accompanied him everywhere.

One Sunday morning, just off the plane in London, I made my way to Wesley's Chapel on City Road. Since it was still an hour before service, I walked several blocks to Petticoat Lane, the outdoor market near the church. Although it was early Sunday morning, the streets were already packed with as colorful a display of humanity as I have ever seen. There were mobs of people, hawkers calling their wares, youths laughing, women gossiping, a scene throbbing with vitality. I was sure John Wesley would have loved such a scene and have at once begun preaching to the throngs. When church time came, I entered Wesley's very own chapel. Twenty or thirty persons were seated in a somnolent atmosphere that found me soon dozing after my all-night plane trip. Periodically, I started awake to hear the monotonous dispirited man in the pulpit. Afterwards, the handful of people filed out, with no friendly exchanges, each isolated and alone, emerging into the sun from the gloom within.

The contrast of Petticoat Lane and Wesley's Chapel that morning could not have been more complete. Wesley would not have tolerated it. He was introducing people to the most exciting and satisfying experience that life has to offer, and he carried it to them joyfully. He deeply believed that holiness is the only true happiness. Every man controlled by "vicious spirits" is literally bound to be unhappy. Only the child of God, filled with the gracious Spirit, has found life. In Wesley's Sermons and Letters alone, Albert Outler has found forty-six correlations of "happy and holy." I used to hear Hamilton Aulenback, the supercharged, Episcopal rector in Philadelphia, call himself over and over "the happy and holy rector." Little did I realize that this was pure Methodism returned home! Wesley sought men and

5. Leeds Parish Church: 1842-1849. Although Leeds was not a cathedral appointment and was geographically removed from Samuel Sebastian's other appointments, the vicar used a full cathedral-type service including all the music. Leeds was the parish from which several vicars had been translated to the episcopacy, and it had all the advantages and opportunities of a cathedral for the musician as well.

While Dr. Samuel Sebastian was organist at Leeds he published his best known writing, A Few Words on Cathedral Music. (A facsimile of the first edition of 1849 is published by Hinrichsen, No. 1961b, and is available from C. F. Peters in New York.) In more than a few words, he bemoaned the low state of English cathedral music and laid the blame at the feet of the clergy.

The musical profession . . . feel . . . that the Clergy either systematically disparage music, or at best view it with a cold side glance, and have ever done so since the reign of Elizabeth; and this for no better reason than that the interests of religion were far above those of music; and that the claims of a vastly increasing population have been great and pressing. On this ground have they in later years permitted the spoliation of Choirs; and from this cause, even at the present day, is it most difficult to awaken the authorities to the interests of music. (pp. 55-56)

He proposed a plan of reform for cathedral music, including the setting of professional standards, raising the salary of choirmen and organists, establishing a "Musical College" for the education of musicians and for providing such musicians for cathedrals, and forming a "'Musical Commission' . . . exercising authority in the Musical affairs of the Church generally" (p. 71).

6. Winchester Cathedral: 1849-1865. It was during his appointment at Winchester that Dr. Wesley developed his interest in hymnody. His most famous hymn tune, "Aurelia," was composed while he was at Winchester, and he was collecting and writing other hymn tunes during this time. "Aurelia" is the only one of Dr. Wesley's hymn tunes in the American Methodist hymnal. It is best known as the tune for "The Church's one foundation" (Stone), although it has also been used as the tune for "From Greenland's icy mountains" (Heber), "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" (Montgomery), "Jerusalem the golden" (Bernard of Cluny), and "O day of rest and gladness" (C. Wordsworth).

Samuel Sebastian's anthems, "Ascribe unto the Lord" and "Praise the Lord, My Soul," come from this period in his career. The latter includes as its final section the very well-known "Lead Me, Lord." This one section of the larger anthem appears in The Methodist Hymnal (No. 802) as a selection to be sung before prayer, but it can just as effectively be used before the Scripture lesson or indeed as a choral introit or call to worship at the beginning of service; and it is suitable for use by the congregation as well as the choir.

7. Gloucester Cathedral: 1865-1876. During this time Samuel Sebastian published The European Psalmist (1872), a large collection of hymn tunes, chants, and short anthems. Dr. Wesley included in this work all the hymn tunes of quality which had not appeared in hymn-books by 1872 and a number of

his own tunes whether previously published or not. Of the 615 hymn tunes 143 were by Samuel Sebastian, and all eleven short anthems were his compositions.

Samuel Sebastian did not play at Gloucester Cathedral in 1876, although he remained organist officially until his death. His last service was Christmas Day, 1875, and he surprised the congregation by including Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" as a voluntary.

Samuel Sebastian was known to his contemporaries as a man of unstable character and unpleasant disposition. We have mentioned his dispute with the clergy in his essay on cathedral music (1849). Dr. Wesley also complained that he had to give so many music lessons that he had no time for composition. He did not like to practice, although he was a master at improvisation on the organ. Frequently he neglected his duties to go fishing. While he was organist at Winchester Cathedral, he had the staircase to the organ loft altered so that he could arrive after the service had begun, without the congregation's seeing him.

Yet Samuel Sebastian Wesley contributed greatly to English church music of his century—and ours. His acquaintance with the history of music and with music on the Continent gave him a broader understanding and a greater ability of expression than any other English church musician of his time.

Some of Samuel Sebastian's church music, including all the anthems named in this article, is available on recording. English Cathedral Music (Argo ZRG 5406) includes three of his anthems, one of his father's, and some works by other composers. Choral Masterpieces of Samuel Sebastian Wesley (Lyricord Stereo LLST 7173, Monaural LL 173) is devoted entirely to his works. A fuller account of his life and work is given in Erik Routley's book, The Musical Wesleys (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1968), on which we have relied for much of our information here.

Although only one of Dr. Wesley's hymn tunes appears in our American Methodist hymnal, several of his tunes are in current use in other American hymnals and in British hymnbooks. The tunes that accompany this article are sent out with the hope that our churches will celebrate our Wesleyan heritage by using them frequently. Additional hymn tunes by Samuel Sebastian Wesley will be made available on request. How much better to sing Wesley to Wesley, as in the tune "Wrestling Jacob," than to sing Wesley to "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon" (called "Candler" in our American Methodist hymnal, No. 829)!

## [PSALM CXVI. 8]

Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine  
eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.—cxvi. 8.

Psalm 116:8

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Short Hymns on Select Passages  
of the Holy Scriptures, 1762

Moderate.

1 My soul thro' my Re-deem-er's care Sav'd from the sec-ond death I feel,  
2 Where-fore to him my feet shall run, Mine eyes on his per-fec-tions gaze,  
Mine eyes from tears of vain de-spair, My feet from fall-ing in-to hell:  
My soul shall live for God a-lone, And all with-in me shout his praise. A-men.

## [LEVITICUS VI. 13]

The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out.—vi. 13.

Leviticus 6:13

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Short Hymns on Select Passages  
of the Holy Scriptures, 1762

Hereford L.M.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1810-1876

1 O Thou who cam-est from a-bove, The pure, cs-les-tial fire t'im-part,  
2 There let it for thy glo-ry burn With in-ex-tin-guish-a-bls blaze,  
3 Je-sus, con-firm my heart's ds-sire To work, and speak, and think for thee,  
4 Read-y for all thy per-fect will My acts of faith and love re-peat,  
Kin-dle a flame of sa-cred love On the mean al-tar of my heart;  
And trem-bling to it's Source re-turn, In hum-ble prayer, and fer-vent praise.  
Still let me guard the ho-ly fire, And still stir up thy gift in me,  
'Till death thy end-less mer-cies seal, And make my sac-ri-fice com-pleat.

## PSALM LI. 10

Make me a Clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, cento  
Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1742

Wetherby C.M.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1810-1876

1 O for an Heart to praise my God, An Heart from Sin set free!  
2 An Heart re-sign'd, sub-mis-sive meek, My dear Re-dacm-er's Throne,  
3 An hum-ble, low-ly, con-trite Heart, Be-liev-ing, true, and clean,  
4 An Heart in Ev-ery Thought re-new'd, And full of Love Di-vine,  
5 Thy Na-ture, dear-est Lord, im-part, Come quick-ly from a-bove,  
An Heart that al-ways feels Thy Blood, So free-ly spilt for Me!  
Where on-ly Christ is heard to speak, Where Je-sus reigns a-lone.  
Which nei-ther Life nor Death can part From him that dwells with-in.  
Per-fect, and right, and pure and good, A Cop-y, Lord, of Thine.  
Write Thy New Name up-on my Heart, Thy Now, Best Name of Love. A-men.

## [JESU, MY TRUTH, MY WAY]

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, cento  
Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1749

Hope S.M.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1810-1876

1 Je-su, my Truth, my Way, My sure, un-err-ing Light,  
2 My Wis-dom, and my Guide, My Coun-sel-er Thou art;  
3 Teach me the Hap-py Art In all Things to de-pend  
4 Thro' Fire and Wa-ter bring In-to the weal-thy Place,  
5 O make me all like Thee, Be-fore I hence re-move;  
6 Let me thy Wit-ness live, When Sin is all de-stroy'd,  
On Thee my fee-ble Soul I stay, Which Thou wilt lead a-right;  
O nev-er let me leave thy Side, Or from thy Paths de-part.  
On Thee, who nev-er wilt de-part, But love me to the End.  
And teach me the New Song to sing, When per-fec-ted in Grace.  
Set-tle, con-firm, and 'stab-lish me, And build me up in Love:  
And then my spot-less Soul re-ceive, And take me home to God. A-men.

# WRESTLING JACOB

Genesis 32:22-30

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, cento

Stanza 5, line 5, altered

Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1742

Wrestling Jacob 88.88.88.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1810-1876

Moderate.



1 Come, O Thou Trav-el-ler un-known, Whom still I hold, but can-not see,  
2 I need not tell Thee who I am, My Mis-er-y, or Sin de-clare,  
3 In vain Thou strug-gled to get free, I nev-er will un-loose my Hold:  
4 Yield to me Now-for I am weak; But con-fi-dent in Self-de-spair:  
5 'Tis Love, 'tis Love! Thou diedst for Me, I hear Thy Whis-per in my Heart.



My Com-pa-ny be-fore is gone, And I am Left a-lone with Thee,  
Thy-self hast call'd me by my Name, Look on Thy Hands, and read it there,  
Art Thou the Man that died for me? The Se-cret of Thy Love un-fold;  
Speak to my Heart, in Bless-ings speak, Be con-quer'd by ry in-stant Prayer,  
The Morn-ing breaks, the Shad-ows flee: Pure U-ni-ver-sal Love Thou art,



With Thee all Night I mean to stay, And wres-tle till the Break of Day.  
But who, I ask Thee, who art Thou, Tell me Thy Name, and tell me now?  
Wres-ting I will not let Thee go, Till I Thy Name, Thy Na-ture know.  
Speak, or Thou nev-er hence shalt move, And tell me, if Thy Name is Love.  
To me, to All Thy Mer-cies move, Thy Na-ture, and Thy Name is Love. A-men.



## CAPTAIN WEBB (1724-1796)

Bishop Matthew Simpson comments upon Captain Thomas Webb, "He well deserved the title of the first Apostle of Methodism in America." We cannot publish The Historical Trail this year, the 250th anniversary of Captain Webb's birth without some presentation of the events of the life of this great lay pioneer of American Methodists. Webb was a Captain in the British Army.

- 1744: Enlisted in the Forty-eighth Regiment of Foot
- 1755: Came to America
- 1759: Lost an eye while serving with Wolfe in Quebec
- 1760: Married Mary Arding of New York
- 1767: Visited the new society in New York City, while barracks master at Albany New York. The appearance of a man in a British uniform with a patch over his right eye startled the people. The novelty of a man preaching in a scarlet coat soon brought great numbers to hear him. More attended than the room could contain. Through Webb's influence, a lot was purchased on John Street. The church was built in 1768. Webb gave thirty pounds toward the building.
- 1767 or 1768: Formed a class in Philadelphia that met in a sail-loft
- 1769: Helped Joseph Pilmore, one of the first Methodist Ministers sent to America, purchase the first Methodist Church of Philadelphia, St. George's.
- 1769: Introduced Methodism in Delaware. He extended his efforts into Long Island and New Jersey
- 1772: Returned to England; begged the Leeds Conference to help the American work; married his second wife.
- 1773: Returned to America with the three missionaries, Thomas Rankin, George Shadford, and Joseph Yearby.
- 1775 or 1776: Returned to England
- 1796: Died in Bristol, England, on December 21

It is hoped that a more detailed article on the life of Webb will appear next year in The Historical Trail. Captain Webb is considered the principal founder of Methodism in the American Colonies. The history of Methodism in New Jersey is not complete unless the name of Webb is included. The churches he founded in our conference are Burlington: Broad Street, Pemberton, Trenton: First, and Pennington. Manahawkin and Newport are other communities where Webb probably was instrumental in beginning Methodist Societies. If anyone finds a record of a connection of Webb with the beginning of a church, please send the information to Rev. Robert Steelman or Dr. J. Hillman Coffee.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Our society is doing many interesting things. Many of these things are tied in with the Bicentennial Years. This is a good time to invite others to become members of the society. You and your friends may become a member of the Historical Society of the Southern New Jersey Annual Conference by the payment of \$2.00 annual dues. Please send them to our Financial Secretary, Rev. James E. Thompson, 20 Union Street, Manahawkin, New Jersey 08058. Also available is the Benjamin Abbott Life Membership of \$50.00. Individuals or churches are invited to become Life Members of the Society.

Added to the library of our Commission on Archives and History, which is housed at the Pennington School Library, are some very important books. A very helpful two volume publication which we have purchased is the Encyclopedia of World Methodism. This is an excellent all inclusive set of books about Methodism from its beginning to the present time. We have also acquired a republication of A Short History of the Methodists by Jessee Lee. Another history of our church which we have secured is The Story of American Methodism.

Be a part of the Bicentennial Celebration of our nation by doing some of the following suggestions:

1. Organize a local church committee on Records and History and elect a Local Church Historian if you have not already done so.
2. Write and publish the history of the local church.
3. Observe Heritage Sunday (nearest Sunday to May 24).
4. Note that July 4, 1976, will be a Sunday. Make this an important highlight.
5. Recognize long-time members.
6. Develop an oral history program to gather the oral tradition (good youth project to visit old-timers and write down their reminiscences).
7. Make a listing of all of the church records and file a copy with the Commission on Archives and History of the Conference.

If you would wish more suggestions or help with these suggestions contact Rev. Robert Steelman, 134 Methodist Road, Newport, New Jersey 08345, Rev. Elwood Perkins, 2517 Sherman Avenue, Pennsauken, New Jersey 08109, or Dr. J. Hillman Coffey, 17 Brainerd Street, Mount Holly, New Jersey 08060.

Visit your library room at the Pennington School Library. Make use of the visual aids in our Conference Office Building. We have some very excellent ones to help you understand Methodism. Use them for your membership classes.

May this be an excellent year in our churches as we receive inspiration from our fine heritage.

Dr. J. Hillman Coffey  
Archivist-Custodian